

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset state that Denmark aligns itself fully with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by his Excellency Ambassador Leinonen. Please allow me only a few additional remarks highlighting the priorities of Denmark.

Our gratitude goes to Ambassador Yun Young Lee for his sterling efforts as Chair of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties. We wish him all the best in his new responsibilities. We also thank the Chairperson of The Executive Council, Ambassador Andrea Perugini, for his able stewardship of the Council.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to Ambassador Kostov for his willingness to assume the responsibilities of chairing the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the conference. I assure you of Denmark's full cooperation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The budget proposal for 2020 is reasonable and appropriate. It will enable the OPCW to continue its core tasks and discharge its mandatory obligations, while maintaining assessed contributions at the 2019 level. We commend the ability of the TS to reprioritize and achieve efficiencies and fully support the proposed budget in its entirety.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we have seen in Syria, Salisbury, Malaysia and Iraq, the threat of use of Chemical Weapons continues to confront us. In Syria numerous chemical attacks have taken place with severe civilian casualties as a result. We applaud the timely steps taken in response by the Technical Secretariat and by us – States Parties – collectively. The vital work of the IIT and the FFM must continue. Denmark stands fully behind the Director General and his staff. The Syrian regime must cooperate fully and without further delay in identifying those responsible for these attacks. And the perpetrators must be held accountable – there can be no impunity on such serious matters.

We also call on the Syrian regime to cooperate fully with the Declarations Assessment Team, and provide complete disclosure of its chemical weapons programme. Compliance with treaty obligations is imperative. This is the only way to prevent future use of Chemical Weapons in Syria.

Mr. Chairperson,

We will in the coming days consider a proposal from the United States, Canada and The Netherlands to update the schedules, including with the substance used in Salisbury. Denmark fully supports this proposal as an important step in preventing new and emerging threats and in keeping the Convention fit for purpose. We also note the modified proposal by the Russian Federation and hope both proposals can be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is of vital importance that the OPCW remains in touch with its constituency, be it State Parties, Chemical Industry or Civil Society. We regret that some NGOs were prevented from participating in this session of the Conference and hope this will not happen again. All stakeholders must be involved in the work of the organisation and in turn, they enrich and enhance its output and impact.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, let me thank the Director General and his staff for their tireless efforts in implementing the Convention. In Syria and elsewhere the Technical Secretariat continues to demonstrate the highest degree of impartiality, integrity and professionalism. For that we are grateful, and Denmark is ready to continue to work with the Director General and the Secretariat in every possible way to achieve our ultimate goal – A World Free of Chemical Weapons.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson, and request that this statement be considered an official document of this session.